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Viewing cable 09RIYADH447, COUNTERTERRORISM ADVISER BRENNAN'S MEETING WITH

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| Reference ID | Created | Released | Classification | Origin |
|--------------|------------------|------------------|----------------|----------------|
| 09RIYADH447 | 2009-03-22 10:14 | 2011-08-30 01:44 | SECRET | Embassy Riyadh |

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NSC FOR JBRENNAN AND JDUNCAN; STATE FOR S/WCI

EO 12958 DECL: 03/16/2019
TAGS PREL, PTER, KWBG, SA, AF, IN, PK, IR, IZ
SUBJECT: COUNTERTERRORISM ADVISER BRENNAN'S MEETING WITH
SAUDI KING ABDULLAH
REF: RIYADH 427

Classified By: Pol Counselor Lisa Carle, 1.4(b),(d)

¶1. KEY POINTS

-- (S) Saudi King Abdullah welcomed White House counterterrorism adviser John Brennan, S/WCI Ambassador Williamson, and Ambassador Fraker to his office. Brennan presented the King with a letter from President Obama expressing a personal message of friendship, appreciation for our close association, and the importance of continued cooperation. The King said he had told Iranian Foreign Minister Mottaki only minutes before that Iran should stop interfering in Arab affairs, and he expressed a complete lack of trust in Iraqi PM al-Maliki and held out little hope for improved Saudi/Iraqi relations as long as they remained in power. When asked what advice he had for President Obama, the King said he had "one request": that it was "critically important to restore American-Saudi relations."

¶2. (S) PLEDGES OF FRIENDSHIP: Brennan asserted that the U.S./Saudi alliance must remain strong, and assured the King of President Obama's wish to continue to work together.

¶3. (S) U.S. CREDIBILITY IS CRITICAL: The Bush Administration is now in the past, the King said. Both President Bushes were his friends, but the King believes that the U.S. must demonstrate credibility and leadership in the world.

¶4. (S) THE WORLD NEEDS OBAMA: Brennan said President Obama looked forward to seeing the King at the G-20 summit in London. "Thank God for bringing him here," the King said.

¶5. (C) THAT WITHOUT WHICH NO SAUDI MEETING IS COMPLETE: Abdullah said "as a friend" that "it was a mistake" to limit access of Saudi citizens to detainees at Guantanamo Bay.

¶6. (S) GUANTANAMO WILL BE CLOSED: Brennan explained that President Obama had made a commitment to close Guantanamo to eliminate the potential threat of terrorism.

¶7. (S) HOW TO TRACK DETAINEES: "I've just thought of something," the King added, and proposed implanting detainees with an electronic chip or tracking device.

¶8. (S) A "HEATED EXCHANGE": The King noted that Iranian FM Mottaki had been "sitting in that same seat (as Brennan) a few moments ago." The King responded that he had been "surprised" by Mottaki's comments.

¶9. (S) "SPARE US YOUR EVIL": The King expressed hope the U.S. would review its Iran policy and "come to the right conclusion." Brennan responded that the U.S. must engage with Iran to achieve a peaceful resolution to the nuclear issue.

¶10. (S) AN EMPTY CHANNEL: The King said "three years ago" Iranian Supreme Leader Khamenei had sent his adviser Ali Akbar Velayati with a letter to the King.

¶11. (S) A DANGEROUS NEIGHBORHOOD: Brennan responded that the Saudis lived in a dangerous neighborhood with Iran across the Gulf, with Saudi Arabia and Iraq as neighbors.

¶12. (U) SEE REFTEL: Ref A provided a separate readout on the Iran discussion and the King's meeting with Mottaki.

¶13. (S) IN THE HANDS OF GOD AND IRAN: Brennan expressed the importance the U.S. attaches to achieving peace and stability in Iraq. The King responded that the U.S. must work with Iran to achieve a peaceful resolution to the nuclear issue.

¶14. (S) NO HOPE FOR MALIKI: The King said he had "no confidence whatsoever in (Iraqi PM) Maliki, and the Ambassador (Fraker) is well aware of this fact." The King believes that Maliki is not capable of leading Iraq effectively.

¶15. (S) I MISS MY HORSES: The King appeared alert and at times animated, entertaining his guests with anecdotes about his encounters with Iraqis.

¶16. (S) DIALOGUE AND REFORM AS DUTY: In response to Brennan's praise for the King's interfaith dialogue initiative, his commitment to advancing human rights, and his support for women's rights, the King responded that he believes in the importance of dialogue and reform as a duty.

¶17. (S) PARTICIPANTS: Saudi Arabia -- Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz al-Saud -- HRH Prince Mohammed bin Nayef bin Abdulaziz al-Saud, Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia -- John Brennan, Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism -- Ambassador Ford Fraker -- Ambassador-at-large for the U.S. --

¶18. (U) Assistant to the President Brennan cleared this cable.
FRAKER